

Club launches project to catalog perfin and punches on U.S. and state revenue stamps

Kurt Ottenheimer, president

The Perfin Club is beginning work on a major new catalog project.

The goal of the new catalog is to list, describe, and illustrate all the perfins and punches found on United States and state revenue stamps.

The catalog will include an exact photograph of the design, the name of the user, the types of revenues in which the design is found, the dates of usage, the type of perforator that was used, a scarcity rating, and any other information deemed useful.

Work sheets are currently being prepared for each letter (A,B,C, and so forth) so they can be circulated to members who have information to add. We will be looking for confirmations, corrections, new designs, and additional data that is not included on the work-sheets.

This catalog effort

was started by the late Joe Miller. Thanks to Miller's children, the Perfin Club has acquired most of

his research. His work should provide a solid base for the project.

From his notes and correspondence we know that he had a lot of help in his early work. We hope that these helpers, and others, will join the network of members who will receive and review the work sheets.

The types of perforations found in revenue stamps fall into five basic types.

Type I

These are perfin designs that are also found in U.S. postage stamps and are listed in the new U.S. perfins catalog. Before including them in the revenue catalog, we need to confirm that these designs

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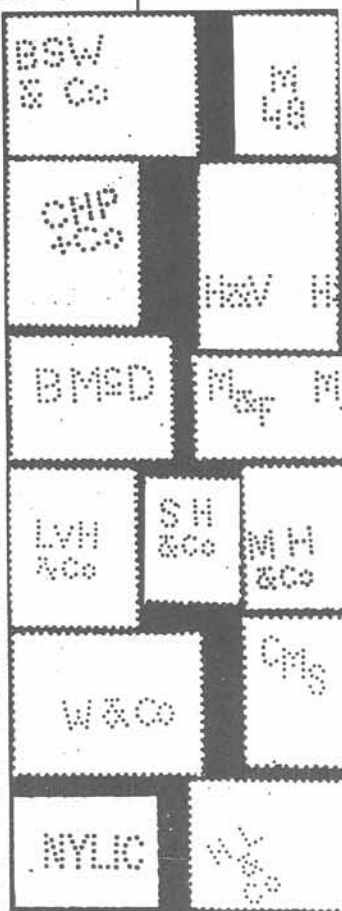


Figure 1. Revenue perforations similar to perfins listed in the U.S. catalog.

(Shown at 65% of original.)

Catalog to include wide range of revenue perforations

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are actually found in revenues. The new catalog will also provide additional information on these designs.

Type II

These are perfin designs that haven't been found in U.S. postage stamps but are similar to those found in the new U.S. perfins catalog. Some of them are illustrated in Figure 1. They have been found in most types of U.S. and state revenue stamps. There is a strong possibility that they ultimately will be found in U.S. postage stamps.

Type III

These are perforations used to cancel stock documents and revenue stamps. Figure 2 illustrates the most common perforation types found, mostly in U.S. and state stock transfer stamps. They usually had the company's initials with a changeable date underneath. Many of them are large designs and it is sometimes difficult to find a stamp with the design complete.

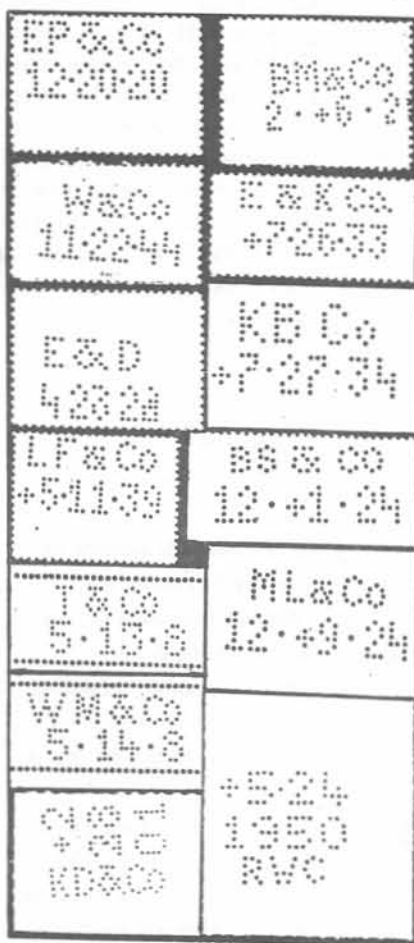


Figure 2. Dated type perforations—the most common of the revenue perforations. (Shown at 65% of original.)

company's initials with a changeable date underneath. Many of them are large designs and it is sometimes difficult to find a stamp with the design complete.

Type IV

These are beer and liquor revenue stamps which usually have very large designs (Figure 3). These are going to create a cataloging problem, but an effort will be made to include them. Once we catalog these large perforated designs, they may become more valuable because collectors will be looking for them.

Type V

These are the punches usually found in older revenue issues (Figure

4). Most companies abandoned these punches and started using the dated type of perforations.

Few types will be excluded

We don't plan to catalog the super-large perforations which were used mainly to cancel large documents. PAID, VOID, and CANCELLED perforations will not be included unless a company name or initials is included and the main purpose was to perforate revenue stamps. Symbols and designs may be

included if they can be connected to a user and are not just general designs or punches that were used by many companies. We do plan a special section that will show these punches without reference to a user, however. In general, the only criteria for a perforation to be included in this catalog is that it has been found on a United States or state revenue stamp and its main use was to perforate revenue stamps.

You are the key to success

The success and completeness of this research project will depend on Perfins Club members who will help us discover all the new designs and missing information we need. It is our hope that we can enlist the help of our colleagues in the American Revenue Association. As impressive as Joe Miller's research work was, it is far from complete. We know this because when we see perforated revenue stamps illustrated in an auction

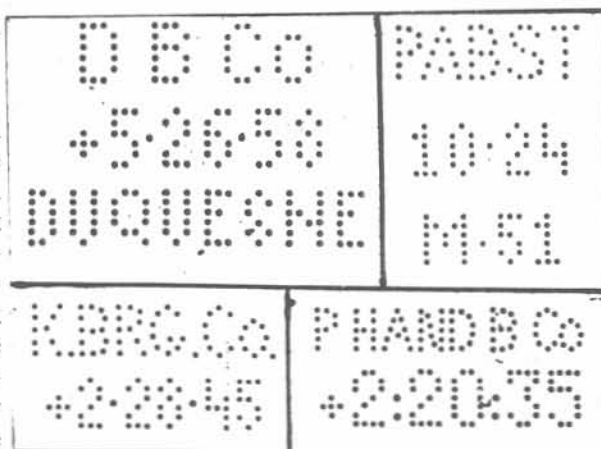


Figure 3. Beer and liquor revenue perforations may attract new collectors once they are catalogued. (Shown at 65% of original.)

be included in this catalog is that it has been found on a United States or state revenue stamp and its main use was to perforate revenue stamps.

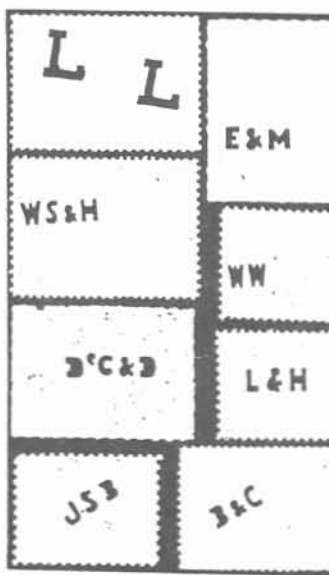


Figure 4. Punch-type perforations—usually hard to identify as to specific users. (Shown at 65% of original.)

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Spaulding to coordinate revenue catalog project

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catalog, a large number of them are not included in Miller's basic work. With the help of our members, however, we hope to find most of this missing information.

Spaulding will lead project

I have appointed Chuck Spaulding (#2355) to be editor of what Miller called the "Rev-Perfs Catalog." That will be the working title for the project. Members who feel they can contribute information are asked to contact Spaulding at 48 Strathmore Lane, Rockville Centre, NY 11570-1848, or to e-mail him at perfinsman@juno.com. If you feel that you can contribute and would like to see Spaulding's work sheets for the letter A, contact him. If you provide feedback, you will added to the list to see additional worksheets.

How many East German perfins are there?

Someone on the Internet a few weeks ago offered to sell an accumulation of East German perfins. Logic would suggest that there aren't many perfins known on the stamps of East Germany. The wide-spread use of perfins had pretty well ended by the time East Germany began issuing its own stamps.

I e-mailed the party offering the stamps and asked for a better description. I received a response saying that the perfins were not on East German stamps but on regular pre-war German stamps. The seller went on to ask if that made a difference.

Obviously it does—which goes to show that there is tremendous ignorance in a lot of quarters about perfins and their significance and value.

It also brings up a question.

I am admittedly not well informed about German perfins and certainly not about East German perfins. I had to ask how many perfin patterns are known on the stamps of East Germany.

Rudy Roy says he has the CZ pattern of Carl Zeiss on Scott 10N13 and 10N120.

Bob Schwerdt reports that he has a J.P. pattern on Scott 55, the Carl Zeiss pattern on Scott 012 and 218, and a PHIL. KW on Scott 721. He speculates that there may also be a POL perfin on East German stamps.

Surely there are others, but how many. The world perfin census two years ago indicated only two, but Schwerdt's list tops that. If you have a perfin on a stamp of East Germany, please share that information. If you can provide a good clean photocopy that would be most helpful. Just send the information along to the editor at the address listed inside the back cover.

The pair of stamps shown here recently showed up in an Internet auction. It's a pair of East Germany #55, one of which has been punched with three circular holes.

Does anybody know any-



Postally meaningful or just the result of somebody with a paper punch and too much time?

thing about such an item? Is there any significance to the punches?

Because the stamps are off-cover it is entirely possible that the punches are the product of somebody with too much time and a paper punch. If you have additional information, please share it with the editor.

One mystery is solved. Pattern R31, we now know, was used by Rafael Del Castillo & Co. of New York City. But now we're curious about what Rafael Del Castillo & Co. did. Were they importers, or maybe manufacturers?

This cover to Steinhardt, Walker & Co. in England doesn't help. Can anybody provide a clue as to the kind of business this firm was engaged in? The cover is from the collection of Richard L. Learn (#3265).

25
years ago

Member Robert Urdang reported he has a California vanity license plate PERFINs. That poses a question about whether other members have license plates with perfins or other philatelic connections. Let the editor know. Bob Schwerdt compiled a list of bisect perfins: perfins that are used to officially create bisected postage stamps. His list included Guatemala, Mozambique, Paraguay, and Shanghai up to that point.

